1: Dube E-5 (1951-52) 1955 AW17 Telugu AW17

578 the general tone of life in the community. Inter-group tension between Hindus and Muslims, engendered partly by political controversies in the Hyderabad State, threatened disharmony and possible breach of peace in the village in the period preceding and following the intervention of the Government of India. The recognition of the *fait accompli* in the State by the Muslims and the change in their approach and attitude towards the Hindus soon 666 established cordial relations between the two communities. At 578 the time of our investigations the Brahmin/non-Brahmin controversy, which was governing the political alignments of people within the State to a considerable extent, had its echoes in Shamirpet also. In the Telangana area, in general, it was taking the shape of an open conflict of interest between Brahmins and Reddis. In Shamirpet the individual relations between the Brahmin household and the Reddi residents of the community were very cordial; but in the discussion of general political and social questions there was a persistent anti-Brahmin feeling. Casteism was a force of no mean significance in the first general elections under the Republican Constitution, and manifested itself in such slogans as 'Reddis must solidly stand together', 'Irrespective of party considerations Reddis must vote for a Reddi candidate', or 'Non-Brahmins must unite to strike a blow to Brahmin domination'. As the interaction between the different castes in the wider political field is still in its initial stages, the pattern of group alignments has not emerged 578 very clearly. A third factor may also be mentioned here. Under 564 the influence of the social and political propaganda of the Sched- 185 uled Caste Federation, the untouchable castes have started voicing their grievances and protests against their position in the caste hierarchy. So far these protests have been mild and verbal only. Perceiving the economic advantages of the traditional system, the untouchables have not yet seriously challenged the assumptions that underlie the structure of the community. However, the abolition of untouchability by law, the granting of equal shares to them in all public utility services, and protests against the traditional system by the more vocal and assertive untouchables have aroused some tension with regard to them in the higher castes. 'Times are changing. The untouchables were admitted to schools first, then they started travelling with us in the same railway trains and buses; and now they want to draw water from our wells and eat with us in public eating-houses. The

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medicines and injections. The old beliefs and practices survive, partly because of the non-availability of quick and efficient modern treatment, and partly also because of its prohibitive cost. Besides the two systems do not conflict, and in order to be doubly sure, most people continue magico-religious practices along with modern medicinal treatment. Adoption of several new tools and instruments for occupational work, as well as of several other items of Western technology, such as buses, railways, razors, and electric torches, introduced in the comparatively recent times is due to their efficiency and utility. In the matter of dress and ornament other factors must also be taken into account. Mill-made cloth was not regarded only as cheap and more durable; it came to be looked upon as more respectable also. The coarse handloom cloth was regarded as rustic, the finer mill-cloth, on the other hand, was more refined and dignified. Further, mill-made cloth allowed a wider range of choice in the matter of colours, designs and patterns. The style of dress was influenced by a variety of factors. Under Muslim rule the style of dress of the rulers became fashionable. With Congress in power there was a sudden switch from the Muslim court-dress to Congress-patronized national dress. Modern Indian—as well as Western-style clothes—cigarettes, sun-glasses and tea are not only popular because of their utility, they possess a great prestige value as well.

Influence of the city has brought about adjustment and modification in several spheres, but the need of balancing different extremes in the organization of the community has so far prevented any drastic structural change in village communities. Under the impact of the new socio-economic factors the family ties have weakened, the kin-group has lost some of its characteristic strength and in the system of status evaluation achieved-status is competing with traditionally ascribed status; but the society still continues to be caste-structured as caste plays a vital role in its social, economic and ritual organization. Democracy has brought in its wake party organization and elections which demand group formation and group allegiance: in several rural areas no new groups have emerged, the loyalties of the people have only been re-affirmed to the pre-existing caste groups. While no important social or economic projects and reforms have so far been put into operation, the first major political change—the

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178 introduction of democratic elections—has demonstrated the
621 strength of the traditional system which has made a bid for
[666] absorbing 'political group formation' and 'democratic elections' in its all-embracing caste structure. Deeper and more far-reaching economic and technological changes, as well as externally induced social reform, touching the basic framework of rural societies, may present a different set of problems and test the strength of the caste structure. Under their new pressures and incentives the community may have to work out a new pattern of adjustment which may necessitate important structural changes.

178 Limited as this change has been, it is none the less not unimportant to ask who inspires and leads this movement towards modification of traditional ways and adoption of new elements of culture. To answer this question it is necessary to analyse the major cultural trends operating in India as a whole. Viewing the country broadly, we find three major trends: (i) the regional culture, founded on the traditions, customs and life-ways of the culture-area; (ii) the national culture, comprising some all-India traits inspired by the national renaissance, cemented by the struggle for self-government as well as by social and economic reform, and sustained by the will to find a rightful place in the comity of nations; the elements in this category being partly revivalistic and partly conscious innovations; and (iii) adoption of traits and elements from Western technology and culture. Besides these, in any given area the 'urban' and 'folk' or rural patterns are clearly distinguishable. While in the urban areas all the three trends delineated above are found to operate with more or less equal force, in the rural areas the folk variety of the regional culture is still predominant although it has been modified by national and Western elements. The inspiration and lead for modification in the traditional ways definitely come from the urban areas brought into the village community by semi-urbanized people or inspired by the example of urban relatives. In the Indian setting while there is no polarity between 'folk' and 'urban' societies, for a proper perspective of social change this classificatory device can be used very effectively. On a limited scale the struggle for supremacy between 'old' and 'new' or between 'tradition' and 'progress' goes on in cities and smaller towns also, and every generation finds itself with a modified set of values. The rural communities clearly take the lead from the urban areas, although

623 562 for them as in the Bombay Village Panchayat Act. As such, few women came forward to contest in the Panchayat elections.

666 **Method of Election** : Method of election was by ballot in all the major Panchayats. Even in minor Panchayats, the elections were revealed to be by ballot as in Kapileswarapuram, Kothapeta, Avidi and by show of hands in Panchayats like Bodasakurru, Yeditha and Alamuru in East Godavari. But, in the majority of minor Panchayats, election was only by show of hands.

623 **Wards and Hamlets** : Representation of members by the several wards in the Panchayat and inclusion of several neighbouring hamlets in the Panchayat jurisdiction were revealed to be the universal features in all the Panchayats surveyed, irrespective of the grade to which they belonged. This revealed, the existence of a fair representative system of Panchayat membership from the several wards and hamlets.

564 **Caste Composition of the Panchayats** : It was revealed to be predominantly Non-Brahmins, in every district and in every grade.

Casual Vacant Seats : Casual vacancies arising in the major or minor Panchayats were generally intimated to the District Panchayat Officer, who on receipt of information went to conduct fresh elections for the seats. But, during the course of the survey some instances came to light, where such intimations were not duly given to the District Panchayat Officer and where consequetly no fresh elections were held.

One Village-One Panchayat : This was the basis which was usually followed, but, there were also instances where joint Panchayats were found to be working well as in East Godavari and Kistna.

Supersession versus Nomination of Panchayat : Election versus nomination of the members of the Panchayats was a controversy that held the ground for a very long time in the discussions of the reform of Local Self-Government in Madras. Even in the Madras Panchayats Bill of 1941, it was contended that a nominated Panchayat was better than an elected one to eliminate friction, where there were contending parties in a village. The period of such bodies to be in power was from 1 to 3 years. This was a time when the Panchayat had to be dissolved for mal-administration and when a special officer had to be appointed for the purpose of carrying on the administration of the village. In practice, Panchayats when they proved unworkable were only superseded. They were not run by nominated members.

Literacy: Literacy test to the members of the Panchayats was never seriously taken by the Madras Government. Only the Vice-president and the President were found to be invariably literate except in a few instances, and even there, local importance and weight of authority served as the best springs of administrative efficiency rather than the test of literacy. 212 623

The Election of the Panchayat President: This sometimes led to village disturbances and party factions, but, the remedy did not appear to get him elected by the villagers as a whole, instead of by the Panchayat. 666 578

Village Officials: The idea of associating the village officers: the Karanams and the Munsif, as the ex-officio members of the Panchayat atttracted the attention of the framers of the Madras Panchayat Bill of 1941, "in order that their experience and influence may be at the disposal of the Panchayat," but, this was strongly opposed by the reformers of the Local Self Government who felt that these village officers were no longer the natural leaders, but salaried officials of the Government and hence unfit to participate in matters of village administration entrusted to a purely honorary body. Another reason that was often adduced against them was that both of them might generally be leaders of two opposing parties and their entrance into the Panchayat would simply wreck its working. 624

Executive of the Panchayat: Under the amendment of the Madras Local Boards Act in 1943, the Government of Madras appointed executive officers to Panchayats. The executive authority had 1. to carry into effect all the resolutions of the Board, 2. to perform all the duties and to exercise all the powers specifically imposed or conferred on the executive authority by the Act; in fact, whenever it was expressly so provided for the sanction of the Board and subject to all other restrictions, limitations and conditions hereinafter imposed, 3. to exercise the executive power, for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of the Act and 4. to be directly responsible for the due fulfilment of the Act. (Sec. 24-B of the amendment to the Madras Local Boards Act 1943). He was to carry out all the resolutions passed by the Panchayat, but this obligation was limited to legal resolutions alone. 642 647

The executive officer was the custodian of all Government Records though the President had free access to them. All the official correspondence addressed to the District Board, or the Provincial Government had to pass through the President. While

642 623 had, they got usally no other remuneration. Still they continued to do the village watch and ward and police work too. In view of the declining importance given to them so far, they had to be properly readjusted in the new village set up. The method of election in the major Panchayats was by ballot, but in the minor Panchayats election by show of hands was the practice in the majority of cases. Representation by wards or hamlets was in existence only in some of the Panchayats, but to avoid village conflicts the system was highly desired by most of them. Panchayats were not found in all villages which were fit to be Panchayats as their formation was not compulsory according to the statute. Cast composition of the Panchayats was predominently Non-Brahmins. There appeared to be some difficulty in filling up the casual vacancies as no regular reports were sent to the Panchayat Officer. One Panchayat in one village seems to be a better practice though no difficulty was seen even in the working of Joint Panchayats. Election versus nomination of members in the matter of superseded Panchayats was for long a matter of controversy; some like Mr. K. Jayaraman (in A study of Madras Panchayats) upholding a nominated Panchayat and others holding a fresh election to the Panchayat to be a better solution. Instead of these two, the best thing appears to be to leave the matter in the hands of an administrator for sometime. As the nominated bodies would not be expected to look to the daily administrative work of the Panchayats, it is a relief that executive officers are appointed to these Panchayats.

[666]

The different village authorities like the Village Panchayat, the Panchayat Court, the Panchayat School, the Irrigation and Forest Panchayats worked with separate constitutions under the control of separate authorities. It is a matter for earnest consideration whether all functions cannot be entrusted to a single Panchayat with expanded membership and more sub-committees to look after these different functions.

Again as there is no statutory obligation for the creation of Panchayats for a village of a fixed population as in Bombay, their progress stands to be slow.

651 **B. Finance**: The revenues at the disposal of the Madras Panchayats were more in comparison to those at the disposal of Panchayats in other States.

The share of the local fund cess distribution to the Panchayats was not based on any scientific basis; a Village Panchayat situated in an irrigated area got more, while a Panchayat in a dry

692 A. **Structure**: Every district had a number of Panchayat Courts in it, and in all of them, fair representation was given to all the communities like Brahmins, Kapus, Kammas, Baljas, Telagas, Harijans, [666] etc. The method of election in all the Panchayats selected was by show of hands only.

[65] B. **Finance**: Court fees were the only source of income at their disposal.

C. **Functions**: The working day, the place of work, the time and procedure of these Courts differed from one another from district to district. Again most of them had both civil and criminal powers.

The Panchayat Courts in the East and West Godavaris were known for their efficient and impartial working. Ganapavaram Panchayat Court in West Godavari had both civil and criminal jurisdiction. Working hours were from 11 a. m. to 5 p. m. In Pennada both civil and criminal powers were bestowed, but since 1930 criminal powers were taken away. As there was no place for holding the Panchayat Court, it was being held in the President's house. Similarly in Sringavarapukota, which started in 1920, there was always heavy work. In places like Bhimavaram and Veeravaram the Panchayat Courts were found to be efficient.

In East Godavari, the Panchayat Courts in Valluru, Kapileswarapuram and Palivela, not to speak of those in major Panchayats like Razole and Amalapuram, were working quite well. In Kistna District, Panchayat Courts in Jaggayapeta, Nuzvid and Vuyyuru were found to be working well. They had representation from all communities, good record of work from 1927, and created good impression on the public. In Vizagapatam not many efficient Panchayat Courts were found except in a few instances like Kothavalasa, where the same President was continuing for the last 20 years. He was also the President of the Village Panchayat. There was no fixed day allotted for the decision of the cases. The Court usually met, whenever there was work, in the house of the President.

Kurnool District was notorious for its village factions and it was confirmed in our investigation. In Nandikotkur, the majority of cases were only criminal. The civil work was far too low every year. About 200 criminal cases came up for the decision as those of illicit cattle grazing, felling fuel, etc. Some of the specimens of the most unsatisfactory type of working were Dhone, Maddikera and Betemcherla where the election for the Panchayat Courts were held 3 years back, but the President was not elected at all. This of

312 3 from the Village Panchayat and one from the Panchayatdars. Again in Kampli in Bellary and in Brahmanayeleru in Anantapur, the President of the Panchayat as well as that of the Irrigation Panchayat were the same without any detriment to the good work of either body.

[666] **Method of Election**: This was generally by show of hands and the election was always conducted by the Revenue Divisional Officer.

Term: The term of office for the members of the Irrigation Panchayat was 3 years, but for the last 13 years, there were no elections due to war and the same old bodies were in power.

[564] **Caste Composition**: The majority was always of non-Brahmins, more than of Brahmins. There was no system of reservation of seats or ex-officio membership as in the case of the Village Panchayats.

651 312 **B. Finance**: This was constisted of meagre Government grants supplemented in a few cases by the small proceeds from sale of grass, etc. The Government of Madras had made the following sanctions to the Irrigation Panchayats:

1.	Kovvada Channel	...	Rs. 30-0-0
2.	Yendaganda Channel	...	„ 30-0-0
3.	Aya Bhimavaram Channel I.	...	„ 60-0-0
4.	„ „ Channel II.	...	„ 60-0-0
5.	Bhaskararao Channel	...	„ 20-0-0
6.	Cherukumilli Channel	...	„ 20-0-0
7.	Kampli Irrigation Panchayat in Bellary		nil.

As regards the income of the Irrigation Panchayats, they did not have any other sources than the grants of the Revenue Department annually as mentioned above; and these were inadequate. Besides these, the Panchayats got some income from the sale of grass on canal bunds, whenever that source was available, but this was possible only in the Circars and not in the Ceded Districts. The actual expenditure was generally in excess of finance and the gap was usually filled in by subscriptions voluntary and methodical. Brahmanayeleru Irrigation Panchayat in Anantpur collected at the rate of Re. 1/- per acre on wet cultivation and as. 4 per acre on dry cultivation in its area.

312 652 **C. Functions**: The income of the Irrigation Panchayats was inadequate to meet the cost of their functions which were generally the same as Bhimavaram and Cherukumilli Irrigation Panchayats, Details of expenditure for these were as below.

PART II

Actual Conditions Revealed by the Survey:

A. Structure: Selection of the sample of the Forest Panchayats was made on the same basis as that of the Village Panchayats in four categories i.e. good, moderate, unsatisfactorily and very unsatisfactorily working according to the connotation explained in the preface. (Table No. 22) 311

The Forest Panchayats were not constituted on one village one Panchayat basis, but they were constituted for a group of villages. Sometimes the Forest Panchayat was for 7 to 8 village hamlets e. g. Bayyavaram in Vizagapatam District, so with almost all the Forest Panchayats in every district.

The membership varied with the number of hamlets to be represented on the Panchayat. If number of hamlets was less and the area of the Forest Panchayat was meagre, naturally, the number of members of the Forest Panchayat was less.

The caste composition was usually cosmopolitan, i. e. 4 were Valamas, 4 were Kapus and one was Raju in Bayyavaram which was typical example. The other Forest Panchayats in other districts revealed a representation of all castes. [564]

The method of election was always by show of hands. The electorate consisted of the cattle owners. [641] [666]

There was no ex-officio membership of the Village Officials.

The ability of the Forest Panchayat and its working depended mostly on the team work of the members and their sense of responsibility, not to speak of the resources at their disposal.

B. Finance: Generally the income of the Forest Panchayats was constituted of the proceeds of the grazing fee, the sale of dead wood, fuel and quarry's stone, income from minor forest produce, bark, leaves, Tangedu, Avaram, etc. Income from sandalwood trees was generally taken by the Forest Department of the Government. Similarly income from big fuel coups was also taken away by the Government except an insufficient share given to the Forest Panchayats for meeting the cost of cutting the wood. (Table No. 23). 311 651

The grazing permits of the Forest Panchayats were usually determined according to the extent of the acreage under command of the Panchayat. The incidence per cow came usually to 3 acres. But the rate of the grazing permits varied from one Panchayat to another Forest